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# The Abbot Courant

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## Au Courant

Once upon a time, there was a fairly well-balanced young princess. She was happy most of the year, but every winter, a strange thing would happen to her: she would lose her perspective. The older she got, the more she realized that the monotony and bleakness of winter gave her a license for bad temper. She would slink around her castle with a deeply pained expression on her face. She resented her parents' inquiries into the causes of her sullenness, but if they tactfully left her alone, she felt hurt and neglected. Her friends were especially kind to her, in her condition — that was, after all, their duty. She would be happy; but then, all at once, she would start up, remembering that she really could not be so light-hearted with all her terrible cares. People started to avoid her and her long tales of woes.

Came the freshness of spring, and she would return to her normal self. She could look back on the winter just past and laugh at her behavior. She could see how imaginary had been most of her unbearable problems: a required action had seemed a rude imposition, a thoughtless remark a sign of hate, any unpleasantness an impossible burden. And she vowed — as she did every year — that the next winter would be different. But not being a true fairy tale princess, she could not live happily ever after.

*Ann Dickerson*

## Problems of Early Marriage

Amid a canopy of pink roses sat the minister, a picture of fright and desolation, as the ushers nervously escorted the mother and father of the groom, and my mother and father onto the stage.

"There goes Johnny, your father," taunted Suzy. Of all the boys in the first grade, I think I hated Johnny the most and resentment boiled within me at the humiliating fact of having him as a father.

I proudly awaited my turn to walk down the aisle as Mrs. Tom Thumb to be. The bridesmaids eyed me with envy as I stood beside Butch Clark, the best-looking boy in the first grade in our opinion. I was especially attracted to him because he was one of the few boys taller than myself.

The wedding guests were nearly seated when Fran cried out in rebellion, "I won't sit by Mike. I want to sit by Marty". Miss Lee quickly assisted Fran to a seat beside Marty before too many parents became alarmed.

The bridesmaids in organdy dresses of green, yellow, pink, and lavender approached the stage next, with smug expressions of triumph at the attention they were receiving. Nothing could dim my happiness, however, for I was the center of attraction as Butch and I started too soon, retreated, and entered once again to the grand wedding march.

I wore a long white satin dress with a train and carried white lilies. My long straight hair had been tediously curled for the occasion. I thought I must look beautiful in such an array, but my hair was lying in damp stringy little curls all over my shoulders, and my lipstick was completely smeared. We kneeled at the altar as Sally and Sandra, twins with hatred gleaming in their eyes for each other, sang the duet, "Love and Marriage Go Together Like a Horse and Carriage." Sandra finished two lines ahead of Sally and poked her to hurry up. In disgust, Sally whispered rather loudly, "I'll tell Mother!" Embarrassment was something unknown to me, and when Clent, the poor minister, fainted and was carried out by Mrs. Williams, it did



not faze me in the least. Butch and I completed the ceremony unaccompanied as the bridesmaids discussed it amongst themselves. Linda shivered with fright and questioned, "Is he dead?" (Clent was her boyfriend, you see.)

I secretly wished Butch could kiss me, but the teachers had decided against it. We all paraded out as pictures were taken.

My parents informed me that I was the prettiest bride they had ever seen, and, of course, I believed them. Complete bliss was mine, however, as Butch hurriedly kissed me on the cheek. I slapped him, which was natural, but I couldn't have been happier.

Marriage was too much to cope with at this age, however, and we soon announced an official divorce.

P.S. Every word is the truth.



*Heidi Wilson*

## Propaganda in Television Advertising

Television advertising is based for the most part on propaganda. Products are so much alike, both in price and quality, that logic and reasoning are of no value. There is little difference between any two detergents or between two cooking oils. Moreover, the high cost of television time demands a short, effective presentation of the product. Therefore advertisements are based on promises to gratify the viewer's desires or to boost his ego.

In adult advertising the desires appealed to are artificial, based on images and ideals of perfection set up by modern society. I shall not deal with the methods of implanting these desires in the mind, such as it is, of the public; Mr. Packard has already discussed the subject adequately. I shall simply consider the methods of exploiting these desires.

The ideal woman, according to television advertising, is "half Indonesian tigress and half Brooklyn housewife." It is her duty to be sexually attractive to all men and at the same time to be a faithful and understanding wife and a perfect mother. This ideal is exploited in advertising by representing the use of a certain product as a quick and easy method of attaining the ideal. Thus the Helene Curtis hair spray commercial: "The complete hairspray for . . . (here a pregnant pause) . . . the complete woman." And for dandruff shampoo, a sister commercial: "Enden dandruff shampoo! Ah-h-h. (a contented sigh, very soft.) Leaves dandruff . . . (another significant pause) . . . the farthest thing from your mind." This commercial is illustrated with action shots of a couple, necking. Here we see the principle behind most how-to-be glamorous commercials: convince the viewer that she needs **only** your product to fulfill her destiny as a woman. What that destiny is, her own imagination will supply.

The advertiser must be very careful to match his product with his program. The Helene Curtis company sponsors "Mr. Novak", a very unusual show in that it can support both sides of women's advertising. The hero, James Franciscus, a combination Greek god and father figure, spends half his time dispensing moral advice to please the perfect mother, and the other half with pretty girls to please the complete woman. For this reason, the program's other sponsors are the Scott paper company and a potato chip manufacturer. The viewer apparently has no trouble switching from the tigris to the housewife phase.

Most men's advertising stresses money and power as manifestations of virility. Cigarette and automobile advertisements are frequently aimed at men. "Marlboro Country" suggests a place where a man can become even more a man, and "Luckies separate the men from the boys, (but not from the girls!)" Automobiles are advertised roaring along a mountain road at 80 MPH, or are displayed regally swathed in red velvet. Either way, the suggestion is that possession of this car is proof in itself of a man's success at all things, not merely at making money. War programs and televised sports events are perfect backgrounds for these promises of virility. Again there is the implication that the purchase of one product ensures fulfillment of the ideal.

Products made especially for men, such as shaving and hair creams, are presented in advertisements which are blatant in their exploitation of sex. One particularly objectionable commercial features a woman rising like a vapor from a tube of hair cream. The slogan is, "Are you man enough to try it?" These commercials are narrated in a tone of voice which suggests everything the listener can imagine, and then some.

The ideal of the perfect family is used on both men and women. The boom in half-prepared frozen pastry is evidence of its effect on women. Pastry is symbolic of all the wonderful little goodies Grandma used to make. And since the perfect woman works hard for her family, the assembling of the pieces is left to her.

The family appeal to men is based on a man's guilt at not spending enough time or money on family recreation. This approach is especially effective in advertisements for children's games. Whole families are shown playing the game and having a wonderful time. "Stratego," a military game, is advertised by a father and son playing together while mother and daughter hover in the background. This suggests that the little boy is "pals" with his father, an unnatural situation, but one highly in favor with amateur psychologists.

Advertisements for old standards in children's toys, such as the teddy bear and the rocking horse, are usually aimed at parents. Since novelty cannot be stressed, parents are exhorted to buy on grounds of the safety and strength of the toy, for surely the perfect parent buys only the very best for his children.

Children's advertising is based on the desire of all children to get out from under parental jurisdiction and do what they please. Little boys long to be big and destructive. This accounts for the "Phantom Raider," a toy battleship. A very excited narrator, who really sounds old enough to know better, gleefully describes "death charges" and "nuclear warheads" and the horrified dismay of the Enemy when a seeming merchant ship turns into a death-dealing battleship. Little boys who might have been perfectly happy with a toy dump truck now want this monstrosity. Children are so impressionable that an excited tone of voice and the phrase "a great toy!" are enough to convince them that this is a toy they must have.

The Invader game and model monster kits use the same advertising technique. The former consists of a toy tank and a battery operated spider. The model monsters are assembled like model ships, but the result is Dracula or Frankenstein. If you can't be a vampire, the next best thing is to own one.

Little girls usually attempt to enter the adult world by imitating their parents. Advertisers cater to this by presenting their dolls as more realistic than any other. Some dolls talk, some eat, move, burp, or wet their diapers. Another more complicated escape for little girls is a doll which transports them into the ideal world of adult advertising. The doll has a wardrobe like a movie star, her own mansion and a swimming pool. Children never see their parents live like this, but it is a simplified version of the way their parents have been taught to want to live. It is advertised as Preparation for Adult Life. (The capitals are mine.)

"Thimble City" is a perfect example of giving children their own world to run. It is a miniature city, complete with inhabitants, and manipulated with magnetic wands. "Anything can happen in Thimble City because YOU run it!" The advertisement shows people falling down manholes and drops a few suggestions for hurricanes and auto crashes.

The propaganda in television advertising is based on the suggestion that there is one key to success in all things. That key may be the right deodorant or the best vacation spot or anything else a manufacturer wants to sell. But it all boils down to one pitch: "This, Friend, is going to make you happy!"

# The Butler And The Rose

A wet rose shimmering  
On the carpet  
brought in by some  
Gifty guest  
And dropped there  
When I took his coat.

I mention this rose,  
Rain-beaten and flat,  
For keeping her beautiful  
Dignity, regal red,  
And save it from  
The stupid carpet.

Perhaps I'm not quite  
Up on my roses, Rose, dear,  
But one such as you  
With foreseeable end  
Should be stuck in a phone book  
Between Steinberg and Stern.

LIZ BONAN





GAIL NIZIAK

*Barbara Hazard*

## The Night That Thundered

THE night was steaming hot. We were accustomed to it, though, since all summer nights in Tokyo resembled this one. Pops (my Dad, but we never called him that) had just helped Mom clear up after supper and they were changing their clothes to go to an evening party somewhere nearby. They never worried about us for we were perfectly safe in our quiet quadrangle and our neighbors on the same property were almost on top of us. We were happily engaged, helping each other faint. It was a safe technique since Mom had inquired at the doctor's. Bill had just taken his twenty deep breaths and I was excitedly prepared to squeeze him. He made a funny blowing noise. I laid him on the dry ground while myriads of mosquitoes nibbled at his ears and all over his body. He came to, and being the organizer, set up plans to visit the neighbors and watch TV. The insolent crook ignored the fact that I had not fainted yet and marched off assuredly towards the neighbors with his brother and sister beside him. My fury surmounted all desires to follow and I stomped to our house and slammed the door, grumbling all the while about the nastinesses of belonging to a family.

I lay on my bed, and traced the peelings of paint Mom had put on a month ago. The heavy atmosphere made everything perfectly tranquil. Mom and Pops had been gone for a half hour, and I was all alone with those paint peelings. They began to take shape: a witch with her broom riding right towards me, and lots and lots of ghosts, all floating around her. Suddenly a rumbling which seemed to come from the center of the earth made my witch and her phantoms vanish. A big piece of peeling landed hard on my eyeball. I rubbed my eye fiercely to keep from being frightened. I could imagine how red it must be. The rumbling had turned to thundering. My window cracked, and I waited, petrified, for the bad man to climb in and kill me. But instead, my desk tipped over and my chair too. The glass on my dresser suddenly smashed.

The thundering became deafening. Tranquility reversed to tumult. I was blinded by steam; swollen all over by heat . . . Another crash . . . A jolt that threw me to one side of my bed. My swollen hands clung to my bedspread . . . Another jolt that placed me in the center again. The crumbling walls of my chamber grew closer and closer. I could not breathe. My lungs collapsed. Slowly, slowly, my bed disintegrated, my legs flew back and hit me hard on my chest, my arms squeezed me at my sides.

I heard a gigantic choked yell, stifled tears. Then I saw Mom over me — white herself — but drying **my** tears.



BARBARA READ

I loved a man;  
I love him still,  
But he  
left me.

He had no fear,  
But he had hope,  
And now  
I see

That I was not  
What he, my love,  
Would have  
me be.

Sometimes I laughed  
At his wild dreams;  
I could  
not see

That they were his,  
And that he loved  
Them more  
than me.

And so I lost  
Him and his dreams.  
But I  
know he

One day, some day,  
Will tenderly  
Come back  
to me

And leave no more,  
For now I dream  
That he  
loves me.

CLAIRE MOORE

I n the apartment below mine, a piano lesson was in progress. My head bobbed with the downbeat of every measure which drifted to my ear. The trials of the enslaved musician were compatible with my strain of thought.

Rhythmically, a weariness marked time. Faltering, my consciousness sought for a melody to give the tempo meaning. The ideas were too vague to be supplemented by harmony. Fatigue counted years. Memory fumbled for an aim to contribute a development. The impressions were but shadows; the tone was not clear. Only the beat of exhaustion was

dominant . . . dominant . . . dominant . . .

A scolding voice shattered the steadiness. The music stopped. My head stopped. My thought stopped. I stopped.







*Val dePeyster*

## Forgotten Fairy Tale (II)

Once upon a time there lived a beautiful princess named Gremulteema. She occupied a dismal tower of the Ortal Castle on the rocky Isle of Ortal and waited for her true love to come sailing across the Ortal Sea. All Gremulteema knew about her true love was his initials P. T. O. She also knew that Flossenheiffer, a very thin fairy with stringy hair, had done all in her power to prevent anyone from arriving safely on Ortal. This was because Gremulteema's great grandmother had once mistaken Flossenhaiffer for a purple dust mop. Flossenheiffer had sent dragons and sea monsters to guard the Ortal coast and then flew into her cave for a nap.

Now there happened to be two travelers on their way to Ortal. They were Prince T. Ogulthorp (who had a reputation for slaying fiery dragons and cold-blooded sea monsters) and an ogre named Peter. When they landed, the dragons and sea monsters rushed upon Prince T. Ogulthorp hoping to ruin his reputation; but he valiantly slew them all except for a very small red one. The red one was not grateful. He swallowed the prince and so became too sick to attack Peter. Peter continued to the castle, where he spied Gremulteema and fell in love with her. When Gremulteema learned that he was Peter the Ogre, she was entirely satisfied and consented to leave with him. Just as she jumped out of the dismal tower into Peter's arms, Flossenheiffer woke up. Flossenheiffer was so furious she stamped her foot and caused a tidal wave which drowned the lovers and washed the whole Isle of Ortal away (including the dismal tower).

after It had arrived  
    and after It had conquered  
i decided It was no good and the world was no good  
    nothing would do  
    nothing could exist  
if i was dissatisfied (and i was)

the sun shone, warm, upon me  
    but i wanted to stay cold  
the waves came up and lapped my toes  
    and dared me to do something  
    about It  
the sky was blue, and i said  
    "sky turn green"  
    but it didn't  
so i sat and dug my toes into the sand and cursed  
    and hoped it would rain (what else could i do)

it rained down hard upon me  
    and i ran and ran  
but i didn't go anywhere because It was behind me  
    so i said  
    "It go away."  
It didn't, but i had won inside (i could tell)  
    so i ran  
    and ran  
along that sandy beach in the rain

DOROTHY CHENEY

I finished my drink. The bar was stuffy and noisy. All the tables were taken except one in a far corner where one old man sat. I ordered another drink, paid for it, and started for the distant seat. Crossing the smoke-filled room was like rowing a boat through a morning fog. It seemed cooler and clearer when I arrived at the table.

The figure that sat opposite me was a shabby, lost dog. The being was hunched over an empty glass and bottle, and seemed lifeless. A dirty, frayed tweed coat covered his shoulders, and a listing, dusty hat lay beside his hand on the table. His head was bowed so that I could not see his face, and his sandy hair was abundant and tousled. His hands were the only other parts of him that weren't hidden. They were youthful and soft, not calloused by work.

Being the intruder, I felt it was my duty to begin a conversation, since it was evident he did not plan to. Finishing my drink in one bolt, I began strongly, "Have you been outside since it started to snow? It's really beautiful. Would you care for another drink, your bottle's empty."

Slowly, almost forebodingly he lifted his face, revealing unshaved, tarnished skin and weary lines. His pale blue, round eyes met mine as his thin lips began to move. "I have seen God," he said distinctly in a stage whisper.

I feared that perhaps this man opposite me was a fanatic, the only one in the world, and I had chosen to drink with him. Flinching under the glare of his eyes, I started when the hands of his static form moved. Still staring at me, he again spoke. "I saw God; He was out there where you say it's now snowing. I looked up at the sky and saw Him leaning on His great old staff. Preparing to deliver a fatal blow, He raised that stick over His head. 'Stop; I shouted, and mounted the steps of the cathedral, 'Stop, for I am in the way and shall never move from the path of your club.' Then He smiled, and lowering His staff He stood before me as plain as I am here now. Then gently He said, 'Child, I feared you were dead.' Then He vanished."

Convinced that this man was insane, I tore my eyes from his and rushed out the door. I spent my time until dawn in a pub two blocks from the Great Cathedral.

After sleeping off my hangover, I dusted off my jacket and prepared for a new day. I bought the evening paper (a foolish yet regular waste of seven cents because all I ever read were the headlines) and absent-mindedly my eyes followed the heavy black print, "China's Plot to Destroy World Thwarted".

## Suicidal Point

There is a point  
At which to pause,  
The edge of a leaf,  
The end of a clause,  
And wonder where  
The leaf began  
And why the clause  
And by whose hand.  
I wonder where  
My journey ends  
And if I truly  
Have some friends.  
This is the point  
At which to close  
My life - a book  
Which no one chose.

LIZ BONAN



You are sitting  
quietly,  
drowsily.  
A murmur surrounds you,  
soft lights.  
A dense fog  
dims  
shades  
engulfs;  
your thoughts  
aimless  
misty  
oblivious  
to murmurs that surround you  
you sit  
hushed  
as if the unexpected is expected.  
You breathe deeply  
sigh  
while in the night  
velvety  
black  
the unexpected takes place.  
Stealthily  
noiselessly  
they work  
moving  
shifting  
erecting.

Finale:  
a soft  
1  
2  
3  
a crunch of snow  
and the battle-cry,  
"MOZZARELLA"  
rings  
resounds  
echoes  
and fades into night  
velvety  
black.  
Once again  
you sit  
quietly  
drowsily.  
A murmur surrounds you  
the lights  
blurr  
dim  
a soft fog . .  
. . . .

ANNE MOSES



*Sue Winet*

Our Saviour

The girl was barely visible in the dark room. She lay upon the old mattress, half-covered by a dirty blanket. A broken radio and a small night table were her sole companions as she slept in the dismal flat. Frequently a whirring sound would come from the radio, and the girl would moan softly in her sleep. A calendar was tacked to the grimy wall above the bed. It announced in red letters, "Christ died for our sins." A single sunbeam shone through the window and illuminated one corner of the room. The walls were a dusty grey brick. The radio whirred and the girl turned, making the sounds of a restless unhappy person in her sleep. Over the small night stand were draped a pair of stockings and black leather belt. A thin and faded dress hung in the closet next to a black wool coat. On the floor was scattered a pair of worn-out shoes.

As the sun rose higher in the sky, the sunbeam grew and shone directly upon the words, "Christ died for our sins."

## Geometry

Grey skies reflect unpassioned winter,  
A mirror-image of a geometric life.  
Aging branches, once ageless  
In a springtime green  
Obstruct; create a cobweb view of paradise.  
In a February dream of April Southern sun.  
And led the way to icebox houses  
In a February dream of April Southern sun  
"Go way," he mumbled  
And knocked his headish toes against  
Brick walls of cold.  
Their parabola-formed minds slipped off  
Beyond the crumbled clouds.  
"Go way," he said,  
Tying his frostbitten shoe.

BINA HAYES



While wandering on one dark, well established eve, I came upon an ancient urn, lonely and rejected. I kneeled on the hard cement to examine this dismissed relic. In the dim glow of the street light I saw the shadows of a forgotten culture. And yet, despite the filth and decay of the streets, there grew in a spot of dirt near the grave of that archaic form a frail plant, still thin and pale in its youth. I dared not touch it, but returned to my vessel.

At first glance, it told of dancing girls, and youth. But as I turned this archaic amphora to see its hidden face, it spoke of war and death, and beautiful steeds killed by the swords of men, youths, with no length to their beards.

What is the purpose of this Janus-faced urn, whose deceit was revealed in the light of my world? I shook it, and, yes, heard liquid within. But can this wine drown the memory of my wordly insolence? Then I leaned to the lip of that poor earthen urn, and lip to lip it murmured — “While you live, drink! — For once dead, you shan’t return.” I thought of those who drank a round, then crept silently to rest.

What skillful potter had gently shaped the curving form, thumping and spinning his wet clay without error? A time-honoured story, I recall it well, tells of such a clod of moistened earth fashioned into human mold. But if the potter’s hands do shake, and the pot, leaning, lists, does this craftsman throw his marred pots into the fire? I drink, and painless travel the road which to discover we must follow. And this cracked ossuary, with wilted plant beside, shall bear my bones.



## Come December

Come December:

Snow falls,

All frozen and hue and white and pure

And branches are black and they rattle,

Shelled in with slippery, silvery ice.

Your thoughts freeze too.

Locked up are they in cold clear ice

That will not melt;

For the air is frigid

And rigid

And sterile

And full of facts, academic and nasty.

They won't let your thoughts out.

They won't let your love out -

Your warm green suntanned summertime love

That blew out on a breeze and back in your face and out once again

Into woods and water

And sometimes the starlight.

Winter turns inward,

Ambitious and quick,

It lives for itself

And its black-and-white gains.

Love is locked up in a shell of ice and awaits its own return.

MARJORIE STRAUSS

Three men sat  
and stared into space  
one another thought  
about the fall from grace

Three men sat  
contemplating "each"  
one became 'dividual  
other tried to preach

One man left  
couldn't understand  
then tried again —  
and contemplated man.

Three

Wise Men

Minus Two

MARY MARGARET LIVINGSTON









